

**IRP #2 [due Wed. 1/17]:** Read the poem “Ariel” (below)

IMPORTANT: Please **do not** do any research on this poem or author. Use of a dictionary is encouraged.

1. Most readers find this a difficult poem to read & understand—what, specifically, makes it so hard?
  2. Propose, explain and defend a theory about what this poem *means*. Even if you’re mystified, do your best. It’s perfectly fine to use qualifiers such as “might,” “could,” “possibly,” “seems,” and so on.
  3. Optional bonus question: Compose a clear, accurate modern English paraphrase of the entire poem.
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**Ariel**

Stasis in darkness.  
Then the substanceless blue  
Pour of tor and distances.

God’s lioness,  
How one we grow,  
Pivot of heels and knees!—The furrow

Splits and passes, sister to  
The brown arc  
Of the neck I cannot catch,

Nigger-eye  
Berries cast dark  
Hooks—

Black sweet blood mouthfuls,  
Shadows.  
Something else

Hauls me through air—  
Thighs, hair;  
Flakes from my heels.

White  
Godiva, I unpeel—  
Dead hands, dead stringencies.

And now I  
Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.  
The child’s cry

Melts in the wall.  
And I  
Am the arrow,

The dew that flies  
Suicidal, at one with the drive  
Into the red

Eye, the cauldron of morning.